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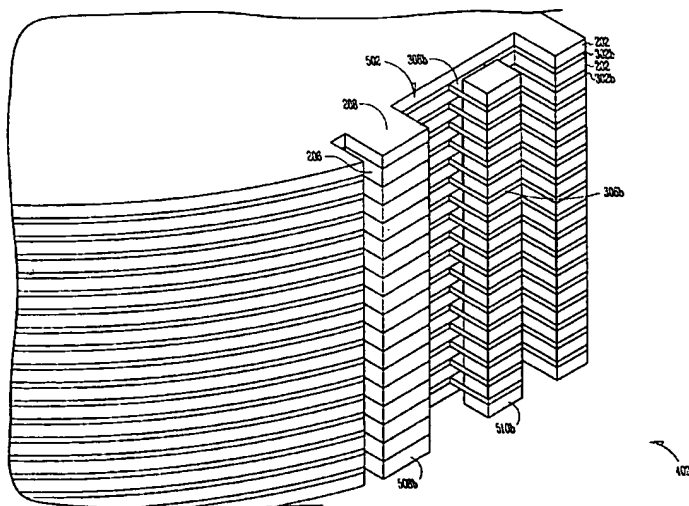
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(54) Title: METHOD FOR INTERCONNECTING ANODES AND CATHODES IN A FLAT CAPACITOR



(57) Abstract: A method includes connecting together one or more anode connection members (206) of one or more anode foils (202) and one or more cathode connection members (306, 306b) of one or more cathode foils (302, 302b) and electrically isolating the one or more anode foils from the one or more cathode foils. A capacitor stack (102, 402, 402b) includes a plurality of cathode layers (302, 302b) having cathode connection members and a plurality of anode layers (202) having anode connection members (206). The anode connection members are connected to the cathode connection members and configured such that the anode layers can be electrically separated from the cathode layers by cutting only the anode connection members or the cathode connection members.

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METHOD FOR INTERCONNECTING ANODES AND CATHODES IN A FLAT CAPACITOR

Claim of Priority

5 Benefit of priority is hereby claimed to U.S. Patent Application Serial
Number 10/874,798, filed on June 23, 2004, which application is herein
incorporated by reference.

Cross-Reference to Related Applications

10 This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application No.
10/804,288, filed on March 18, 2004, which is a divisional of U.S. Application No.
10/299,234, filed November 19, 2002, now issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,709,946,
which is a divisional of U.S. Application No. 09/706,519, filed November 3, 2000,
now issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,509,588, the specifications of which are hereby
15 incorporated by reference.

Field of the Invention

 The present invention concerns implantable medical devices, such as
defibrillators and cardioverters, particularly structures and methods for capacitors
20 in such devices.

Background

 Capacitors have undergone substantial improvement over the years.
Smaller capacitors are in demand for various applications. One such application is
for biomedical implants. For example, defibrillators and pacemakers use
25 capacitors for pulse delivery.

 The defibrillator or cardioverter includes a set of electrical leads, which
extend from a sealed housing into the walls of a heart after implantation. Within
the housing are a battery for supplying power, monitoring circuitry for detecting
abnormal heart rhythms, and a capacitor for delivering bursts of electric current
30 through the leads to the heart.

The capacitor can take the form of a flat aluminum electrolytic capacitor.

Flat capacitors include a stack of flat capacitor elements mounted within a capacitor case. Each flat capacitor element includes one or more separators between two sheets of aluminum foil. One of the aluminum foils serves as a cathode (negative) foil, and the other serves as an anode (positive) foil. The capacitor elements each have an individual capacitance (or energy-storage capacity) proportional to the surface area of the foil.

One drawback in manufacturing such capacitors is that each of the anodes and each of the cathodes must be connected together. For instance, all the anodes are crimped or welded together and attached to a feedthrough terminal for connection to circuitry outside the capacitor case. Another process is also done for the cathode foils in the capacitor stack. Errors during the manufacturing steps may cause defects in the capacitor or decrease the reliability of the capacitor after it is constructed. Another drawback is that the interconnections take up space within the capacitor. This increases the size of the capacitor, which is undesirable when the capacitors are used for implantable medical devices such as defibrillators.

Thus, what is needed is a simple way to provide the anode and cathode interconnections of capacitors with as few steps as possible and which lends itself to mass producing said capacitors.

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Summary

In one embodiment, a method includes stacking a plurality of cathode layers and a plurality of anode layers such that a cathode connection member on each of the cathode layers at least partially overlays an anode connection member on each of the anode layers, connecting the cathode connection members together with the anode connection members, and electrically isolating the anode layers from the cathode layers.

In one aspect, a capacitor stack includes a plurality of cathode layers having cathode connection members and a plurality of anode layers having anode connection members. The anode connection members are connected to the cathode

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connection members and configured such that the anode layers can be electrically separated from the cathode layers by cutting only the anode connection members or the cathode connection members.

This Summary is an overview of some of the teachings of the present application and not intended to be an exclusive treatment of the present subject matter. Further details about the present subject matter are found in the detailed description and appended claims. Other aspects of the invention will be apparent to persons skilled in the art upon reading and understanding the following detailed description and viewing the drawings that form a part thereof, each of which are not to be taken in a limiting sense. The scope of the present invention is defined by the appended claims and their equivalents.

Brief Description of the Drawings

- FIG. 1 is an isometric view of a flat capacitor according to one embodiment of the present invention.
- FIG. 2A is a top view of an anode foil for use in constructing a capacitor according to one embodiment of the present invention.
- FIG. 2B is a top view of a cathode foil for use in constructing a capacitor according to one embodiment of the present invention.
- FIG. 3A is a top view of an anode foil for use in constructing a capacitor according to one embodiment of the present invention.
- FIG. 3B is a top view of a cathode foil for use in constructing a capacitor according to one embodiment of the present invention.
- FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a stack of one or more anodes and cathodes of FIGs 2A and 2B.
- FIG. 5A is a perspective view of the stack of FIG. 4 after the stack has been processed according to one embodiment of the present invention.
- FIG. 5B is a perspective view of a stack of anodes and cathodes according to one embodiment.

FIG. 5C is a perspective view of the stack of FIG. 5B after the stack has been processed according to one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 6 is a flowchart depicting a method of interconnecting anodes and cathode foils of a capacitor according to one embodiment of the present invention.

5 FIG. 7 shows a top view of a capacitor stack according to one embodiment.

FIG. 8 shows a cross-section of a portion of FIG. 7.

FIG. 9 shows a partially etched anode foil according to one embodiment.

FIG. 10 shows a side view of a foil having masks according to one embodiment.

FIG. 11 show a top view of FIG. 10.

10 FIG. 12 shows a method according to one embodiment.

FIG. 13 is a block diagram of a generic implantable medical device including a capacitor according to one embodiment of the present invention.

Detailed Description

15 The following detailed description, which references and incorporates the figures, describes and illustrates one or more specific embodiments of the invention. These embodiments, offered not to limit but only to exemplify and teach the invention, are shown and described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention. Thus, where appropriate to avoid
20 obscuring the invention, the description may omit certain information known to those of skill in the art.

Figure 1 shows a flat capacitor 100 constructed according to one embodiment of the present invention. Although capacitor 100 is a D-shaped capacitor, in other embodiments, the capacitor is another desirable shape,
25 including, but not limited to rectangular, circular, oval or other symmetrical or asymmetrical shape. Capacitor 100 includes a case 101 which contains a capacitor stack 102. In the exemplary embodiment, case 101 is manufactured from a conductive material, such as aluminum. In other embodiments, the case is manufactured using a nonconductive material, such as a ceramic or a plastic.

Capacitor 100 includes a first terminal 103 and a second terminal 104 for connecting capacitor stack 102 to an outside electrical component, such as heart monitor circuitry, including defibrillator, cardioverter, and pacemaker circuitry. In the exemplary embodiment, terminal 103 is a feedthrough terminal insulated from
5 case 101, while terminal 104 is directly connected to case 101. In other embodiments, the capacitor incorporates other connection methods, depending on other design factors. For instance, in some embodiments, capacitor 100 includes two or more feedthrough terminals 103.

Capacitor stack 102 includes capacitor elements 105a, 105b, 105c, . . . ,
10 105n, with each capacitor element 105a-105n including one or more cathodes, anodes, and separators. Each cathode is a foil structure and can include aluminum, tantalum, hafnium, niobium, titanium, zirconium, and combinations of these metals. In one embodiment, each cathode of capacitor stack 102 is connected to the other cathodes by welding or other connection methods which will be discussed
15 below. The cathodes are coupled to conductive case 101, and terminal 104 is attached to case 101 to provide a cathode connection to outside circuitry. In some embodiments, the cathode is coupled to a feedthrough conductor extending through a feedthrough hole.

The separator is located between each anode and cathode. In one
20 embodiment, the separator includes one or more sheets of kraft paper impregnated with an electrolyte. In one embodiment, the separator includes two sheets of paper. The electrolyte can be any suitable electrolyte for an electrolytic capacitor, such as an ethylene-glycol base combined with polyphosphates, ammonium pentaborate, and/or an adipic acid solute.

25 In one embodiment, one or more of the anodes of capacitor stack 102 is a multi-anode stack which includes three foil layers. In other embodiments, one or more anode stacks include one, two, three or more anode foils having a variety of anode shapes. The anode foils are generally foil structures and can include aluminum, tantalum, hafnium, niobium, titanium, zirconium, and combinations of
30 these metals. In one embodiment, at least portions of a major surface of each

anode foil is roughened or etched to increase its effective surface area. This increases the capacitive effect of the foil with no relative increase in volume. Other embodiments incorporate other foil compositions and/or classes of foil compositions.

5 In one embodiment, each anode is connected to the other anodes of the capacitor and coupled to feedthrough assembly 103 for electrically connecting the anode to circuitry outside the case. In some embodiments, the anodes are connected to the case and the cathodes are coupled to a feedthrough assembly. In other embodiments, both the anode and the cathode are connected to feedthroughs.

10 Figure 2A shows an anode 202 according to one embodiment of the present invention. Anode 202 is shown before it is assembled into capacitor stack 102 as shown in Figure 1. Anode 202 includes a main body portion 204 having one or more connection members 206. In one embodiment, connection member 206 includes one or more separate members attached to the anode by welding, staking,
15 or other connection method.

In other embodiments, connection member 206 is an integral portion of anode 202, and is punched, laser-cut, or otherwise shaped from the anode foil. In such an embodiment, portions of connection member 206 are not etched along with the rest of anode 202. For instance, a chemical mask is put on portions of
20 connection member 206 to keep those masked portions from becoming etched during the etching process. As will be discussed below, this provides that those unetched, non-porous sections make welding the edges of the anodes to each other easier.

Connection member 206 includes a proximal section 208 and distal section
25 210. In the embodiment of Figure 2A, connection member 206 is an L-shaped member. However, it can also be hook shaped, U-shaped, and/or have other shape.

In one embodiment, a portion of a distal section 210 along its outer edge is unetched, as discussed above.

In one embodiment, proximal section 208 is connected to main body 204
30 and is defined in part by a pair of cut-out portions 212 and 214 located on opposing

sides of proximal section 208. Distal section 210 is connected to a portion of proximal section 208. In one embodiment, it is integral with proximal section 208. In some embodiments, distal section 210 is attached as a separate member. In one embodiment, distal section 210 is defined in part by a cut-out portion 216 which is
5 located between main body 204 and distal section 210, and a cut-out portion 218 which separates distal section 210 from main body 204.

In this embodiment, connection member 206 is located within the general perimeter or outline of anode 202. In other embodiments, connection member extends further from the main body of anode 202 or connection member 206 is
10 more internal within the main body of anode 202.

In some embodiments, each anode foil in capacitor stack 102 includes an connection member such as connection member 206. In other embodiments, one or more anode foils in a multi-anode stack have a connection member 206 while the other anode foils in the multi-anode stack are connected to the anode having the
15 connection member. For instance, in one embodiment, a three-foil anode stack includes one foil having a connection member 206 and two foils without connection members. The two foils without connection members are welded, staked, or otherwise attached to the foil having the connection member.

Figure 2B shows a cathode 302 according to one embodiment of the present
20 invention. Cathode 302 is shown before it is assembled into capacitor stack 102 as shown in Figure 1. Cathode 302 includes a main body portion 304 having one or more connection members 306. In one embodiment, connection member 306 is an integral portion of cathode 302, and is punched, laser-cut, or otherwise shaped from the anode foil. In one embodiment, connection member 306 includes one or
25 more separate members attached to the anode by welding, staking, or other connection method.

In one embodiment, connection member 306 includes a proximal section 308 and a distal section 310. In the embodiment of Figure 2B, connection member 306 is an L-shaped member. However, in some embodiments it is hook shaped, U-
30 shaped, and/or have other shape.

In one embodiment, proximal section 308 is connected to main body 304 and is defined in part by a pair of cut-out portions 312 and 314 located on opposing sides of proximal section 308. Distal section 310 is connected to a portion of proximal section 308. In one embodiment, it is integral with proximal section 308.

5 In some embodiments, distal section 310 is attached as a separate member. In one embodiment, distal section 310 is defined in part by a cut-out portion 316 which is located between main body 304 and distal section 310, and a cut-out portion 318 which separates distal section 310 from main body 304.

In this embodiment, connection member 306 is located within the general
10 perimeter or outline of cathode 302. In other embodiments, connection member 306 extends further from the main body of cathode 302 or connection member 306 is more internal within the main body of cathode 302.

Figures 3A and 3B show an anode 202' and a cathode 302' according to one embodiment of the present invention. Anode 202' and cathode 302' are shown
15 before being assembled into capacitor stack 102 as shown in Figure 1. Anode 202' and cathode 302' are generally similar to anode 202 and cathode 302, respectively, except connection member 206' does not include a cut-out such as cut-out 212 of anode 202 and connection member 306' does not include a cut-out such as cut-out 318 of cathode 302. Other embodiments utilize other shapes and locations for
20 connection members such as connection members 206, 206', 306, and 306'.

For instance, in various embodiments, connection members 206 and 306 may be in different positions along the edges or even within the main body portions of the capacitor foils 202 and 302. For instance, in some embodiments connection members 206 and 306 are located along edges 220 and 320 of the respective foils
25 202 and 302. In some embodiments, the portions are located along curved edges 222 and 322 of the respective foils 202 and 302. In other embodiments, the portions may be cut-out within main bodies 204 and 304.

In one embodiment, proximal section 308 of cathode 302 and proximal section 208 of anode 202 are located in different positions (relative to each other)
30 on their respective foils, while distal sections 210 and 310 are generally commonly

positioned. For instance, in one embodiment connection members 206 and 306 of the anode 202 and the cathode 302, respectively, are mirror images of each other. In some embodiments, connection members 206 and 306 have generally reverse images of each other. In some embodiments, connection members 206 and 306
5 can have different shapes or sizes relative to each other. For example, the distal portions on either the anode or the cathode can longer or shorter than its opposing distal portion.

Figure 4 shows a stack 402 of one or more alternating anodes 202 and cathodes 302. As shown in Figure 4, connection members 206 and 306 are
10 overlaying and underlying each other. As used herein, overlay and underlay refer to the position or location of portions of the foils which are commonly positioned from a top view. In the embodiment of Figure 4, it is seen that connection members 206 and 306 have some commonly positioned portions relative to each other and some portions which are exclusively positioned relative to each other.

15 For instance, proximal sections 208 of anodes 202 are exclusively positioned or located. This means that at least a portion of proximal sections 208 do not overlay or underlay a portion of cathodes 203. Likewise, proximal sections 308 of cathodes 302 are exclusive portions and include at least a portion not overlaying or underlaying a portion of anode 202. Conversely, distal sections 210
20 and 310 are commonly positioned and each include at least a portion overlaying or underlaying each another. Cut-out portions 214 and 314 are also commonly positioned. Cut-out 218 is commonly positioned with cut-out 312 while cut-out 212 is commonly positioned with cut-out 318.

When stacked as shown in Figure 4, the edges of distal sections 210 and
25 310 form a surface 410. In this embodiment, surface 410 can generally be described as having a first portion 410a which fronts the proximal sections 208 of anodes 202, a second portion 410b which fronts common cut-portions 214 and 314, and third portion 410c which fronts the proximal sections 308 of cathodes 302.

In this embodiment, distal sections 210 and 310 of anode connection member 206 and cathode connection member 306 are fully overlaying one another. Fully overlaying means that there are generally no gaps along surface 410 of stack 402 when the anodes and cathodes are stacked as in Figure 4. The fully overlaid structure of stack 402 provides a complete surface 410 which provides for ease of edge-welding or otherwise connecting connection members 206 and 306 together, as will be described below. As will be discussed below, other embodiments leave one or more gaps in surface 410 when the anodes and cathodes are stacked. For instance, in some embodiments, one or more of distal sections 210 or 310 may not reach all the way across front surface 410.

After being stacked as discussed above, at least portions of connection members 206 and 306 are connected to each other. For instance, in one embodiment portions of distal sections 210 and 310 are connected to each other. In one embodiment, distal sections 210 and 310 are edge-welded all along surface 410. In one embodiment, distal sections 210 and 310 are only connected along portion 410a and 410c of surface 410. In one embodiment, distal sections 210 and 310 are soldered along surface 410. In some embodiments, portions of distal sections 310 and 210 are staked, swaged, laser-welded, or connected by an electrically conductive adhesive. In other embodiments, portions of proximal sections 208 are connected to each other and/or portions of proximal sections 308 are connected to each other.

After being connected, portions of connection members 206 and 306 are removed or separated so that proximal sections 208 and 308 are electrically isolated from each other. As used herein, electrically isolated means that sections 208 and 308 are electrically insulated from each other at least up to a surge voltage of capacitor 100.

Figure 5A shows stack 402 after portions of distal sections 210 and 310 have been removed from the stack, forming a separation 502 between anode connection members 206, which together comprise anode connection section 508, and cathode connection members 306, which together comprise cathode

connection section 510. Separation 502 in the present embodiment electrically isolates section 508 from section 510. Proximal sections 308 are still electrically coupled to each other as are proximal sections 208. In some embodiments, separation 502 is a thin slice. In some embodiments, separation 502 is as wide as cut-outs 214 and 314, as shown in Figure 4. In some embodiments, an electrically insulative material is inserted in separation 502. In various embodiments, separation 502 is formed by laser cutting, punching, and/or tool or machine cutting.

Figure 5B shows a stack 402B of one or more alternating anodes 202 and cathodes 302B, in accordance with one embodiment. Anodes 202 are as discussed above. In this example, cathodes 302B can include the features discussed above for other cathodes and the above discussion is incorporated herein. Cathodes 302B have a shorter distal section 310B than the example discussed above in Figure 4, for example. Distal section 310B can be L-shaped as discussed above or the connection member can be straight out from the cathode body forming an I-shape. As shown in Figure 5B, connection members 206 and 306B include at least a portion that is overlaying and underlying each other. As noted above, overlay and underlay refer to the position or location of portions of the foils which are commonly positioned from a top view. In the embodiment of Figure 5B, it is seen that connection members 206 and 306B have some commonly positioned portions relative to each other and some portions which are exclusively positioned relative to each other.

For instance, proximal sections 208 of anodes 202 are exclusively positioned or located. This means that at least a portion of proximal sections 208 do not overlay or underlay a portion of cathodes 302B. Likewise, in one embodiment, proximal sections 308B of cathodes 302B are exclusive portions and include at least a portion not overlaying or underlaying a portion of anode 202. Moreover, in this example, distal portion 310B of cathodes 302B does not extend across the entire distal portion 210 of the anodes 202. Distal sections 210 and 310B do include a commonly positioned portion along portion 410c where each include at least a portion overlaying or underlaying each another. Cut-out portions

214 and 314B are also commonly positioned. Cut-out 218 is commonly positioned with cut-out 312B while cut-out 212 is commonly positioned with cut-out 318B.

When stacked as shown in Figure 5B, the edges of distal sections 210 and 310B form a surface 410S. In this embodiment, surface 410S can generally be
5 described as having a first portion 410a which fronts the proximal sections 208 of anodes 202, a second portion 410b which fronts common cut-portions 214 and 314B, and third portion 410c which fronts the proximal sections 308B of cathodes 302B.

In this embodiment, distal sections 210 and 310B of anode connection
10 member 206 and cathode connection member 306B are overlaid relative to each other such as to be not continuous across surface 410S, with anode connection members 206 reaching across surface 410S but cathode connection members 306B not reaching across the surface. In other embodiments, the reverse can be true and the cathode connection member can reach across while the anode connection
15 member is shorter and does not reach across.

After being stacked as discussed above, at least portions of connection members 206 and 306B are connected to each other. For instance, in one embodiment portions of distal sections 210 and 310B are connected to each other. In one embodiment, distal sections 210 and 310B are edge-welded all along surface
20 410S. In one embodiment, distal sections 210 and 310B are only connected along portion 410a and 410c of surface 410S. In one embodiment, distal sections 210 and 310B are soldered along surface 410S. In some embodiments, portions of distal sections 310B and 210 are staked, swaged, laser-welded, or connected by an electrically conductive adhesive. In other embodiments, portions of proximal
25 sections 208 are connected to each other and/or portions of proximal sections 308B are connected to each other.

After being connected, portions of connection members 206 and 306B are removed or separated so that proximal sections 208 and 308B are electrically isolated from each other. As used herein, electrically isolated means that sections
30 208 and 308B are electrically insulated from each other at least up to a surge

voltage of capacitor 100 (FIG. 1). For example, dashed lines 451 and 453 define an example of an area that can be removed to electrically isolate the anodes and the cathodes. In various embodiments, different areas can be removed. For example, in one embodiment, a portion of the distal ends 210 of the anodes are removed and the cathode distal sections are not removed at all. In another embodiment, a portion of the commonly positioned section 410c can be removed. Some examples include removing a portion of the distal section 210 of the anode connection member 206 and a portion of the distal section 310B of the cathode connection member 306B. Some examples include removing a portion of the distal section 210 of the anode connection member 206 such that there remains no material or section of the cathode connection member 306B adjacent the anode connection member 206.

Figure 5C shows stack 402B after portions of distal sections 210 have been removed from the stack, forming a separation 502 between anode connection members 206, which together comprise anode connection section 508B, and cathode connection members 306B, which together comprise cathode connection section 510B. Separation 502 in the present embodiment electrically isolates section 508B from section 510B. Proximal sections 308B are still electrically coupled to each other as are proximal sections 208. In one embodiment, the separation is performed such that cathode connection members 306B include some anode material between each layer, while anode connection members 206 do not include any cathode material between the layers.

In some embodiments, separation 502 is a thin slice. In some embodiments, separation 502 is as wide as cut-outs 214 and 314B, as shown in Figure 5B. As noted, some examples include removing a portion of the distal section of the anode connection member 206 such that there remains no portion or material of the cathode connection member adjacent the anode connection members 206. This is advantageous since in some examples the cathode layers can include a titanium coating, for example. A titanium coating can interfere with the performance of the anodes or can cause an electrical leakage into the weld or

connection between the anodes. The present example keeps all cathode material out of the anode side 508B. In some embodiments, an electrically insulative material is inserted in separation 502. In various embodiments, separation 502 is formed by laser cutting, punching, and/or tool or machine cutting.

5 Figure 6 shows a flowchart depicting a method 600 for interconnecting two or more foils of a capacitor according to one embodiment of the present invention. Method 600 includes a block 602, positioning the connection members of two or more foils, a block 604, connecting the connection members, and block 606, electrically isolating portions of the connection members from each other.

10 In one embodiment, block 602, positioning the connection members of two or more foils, includes stacking an anode foil having a connection member having a proximal section and a distal section upon a cathode foil having a connection member having a proximal section and a distal section. The foils and connection members are positioned so that the proximal section of the anode foil connection
15 member does not overlay the proximal section of the cathode foil connection member and the distal section of the anode foil connection member at least partially overlays the distal section of the cathode foil connection member.

 In one embodiment, block 604, connecting the connection members, includes connecting the connection member of the anode foil to the connection
20 member of the cathode foil. In one embodiment, this includes connecting the distal section of the anode connection member and the distal section of the cathode connection member at a portion of the anode connection member that overlays (or underlays) the portion of the cathode connection member. In one embodiment, connecting comprises a single, continuous connection process. For instance, a
25 laser weld or staking process is performed which attaches all the anode and cathode foil connection members together during a single, uninterrupted process. In one embodiment, the connection is performed by edge-welding at least a portion of the distal sections of the anode foil and the cathode foil together. One embodiment includes a laser edge-welding process.

Alternatively, in some embodiments, a portion of the stack is welded during a different process or by a different method than the first process. Some embodiments include soldering, staking, swaging, and/or applying an electrically conductive adhesive.

5 In one embodiment, connection members 206 and 306 are laser edge-welded to each other by a process as discussed in co-pending U.S. Patent Application No. 09/706,518, filed on November 3, 2000, the specification of which is incorporated herein by reference.

10 In one embodiment, block 606, electrically isolating portions of the connection members from each other, includes removing portions of the anode connection member and/or the cathode connection member. In one embodiment, the removed portion includes where the cathode connection member overlays (or underlays) a portion of the anode connection member. In one embodiment, this includes removing a portion of the distal sections of the anode connection member and the cathode connection member. In one embodiment, electrically isolating comprises punching-out a portion of the distal section of the anode foil connection member and the distal section of the cathode foil connection member. In one embodiment, electrically isolating includes laser cutting a portion of the distal section of the anode connection member and the distal section of the cathode connection member.

20 After being processed as discussed above in block 606, proximal sections 208 of the connection members of anodes 202 are still coupled together and proximal sections 308 of the connection members of cathodes 302 are still coupled to each other, while the anodes 202 and cathodes 302 are electrically isolated from each other. Feedthroughs or other terminal members are then used to couple the anodes and cathodes to outside circuitry.

25 One aspect of the present capacitor includes a system for interconnecting anode layers in a flat capacitor stack using vias. In one embodiment, vias are employed to interconnect anode layers. In one embodiment, the vias are made by

inserting conductive interconnects which interconnect anode layers without contacting an intervening cathode layer.

For example, FIG. 7 shows a top view of a cathode and anode layer separated by separator (for example, kraft paper). The cathode layer includes one or more holes which provide ample clearance for a conductive interconnect. The x-section of FIG. 7, shown in FIG. 8, shows that the conductive interconnect will interconnect anode layers without contacting an intervening cathode layer. Thus, the cross section of the cathode hole exceeds that of the conductive interconnect to avoid shorting the cathode to the anodes. The conductive interconnect is electrically connected to the anodes by welding, such as ultrasonic, resistance or other types of welding.

One way to facilitate connections is to use a masking process for connection surfaces on the foil to ensure that the masked surfaces are not etched and/or formed. One way to avoid mechanical breakage of the foils is to use a masking technique which provides gradually non-etched portions of the foil to avoid mechanical stresses (e.g. high stress points) due to discontinuities of etching and which provides a suitable region for interconnection of the via to the foil. This is demonstrated by FIG. 9. The vertical lines show the cross-section of unmasked and masked foil portions. The figure shows that foil etching gradually diminishes over the transition from masked portion to unmasked portion. It is noted that the example shows a pure aluminum foil, but that other etchings and foils may be masked without departing from the scope of the present system.

FIG. 10 shows a side view of a foil and positions of the masks for one embodiment of the present system. The top view is provided in FIG. 11. The positions, shapes and sizes of the masks may vary without departing from the present system, and the demonstrated masks are shown to illustrate the system and are not intended in an exhaustive or exclusive sense. In one embodiment, thickness t is 100 micrometers. However, it is contemplated that other thicknesses may be used without departing from the present system. For example, other thicknesses, including, but not limited to, 50 - 600 micrometers may be used.

The foil dimensions are shown as 500x250 millimeters, but other sized foils may be employed without departing from the scope of the present system. In one application of the present system, a master roll of foil is masked to provide d-shaped cutouts with accurately placed masks where the conductive interconnects
5 are to contact the foil. In one application, the spacing between foils must be large enough to provide a "web" for processing the cutouts.

FIG. 12 shows one process for providing one embodiment of a capacitor according to some of the teachings herein. Raw foil is masked by printing the mask on the foil. The masked foil is etched and then the mask is removed. Oxides
10 are formed on the foil and it is then cut into subrolls. The subrolls are processed by cutting shapes for the final capacitor out of the subrolls. The foil shapes are used to make the capacitors.

The cathode foils are processed to accurately place the cathode holes, which correspond to anode mask layers when overlapped. Paper separators are also cut to
15 provide space for the conductive interconnects. In one application, the perimeter of the paper is smaller than that of the cathode to provide a nonconductive guide for the conductive interconnect. In alternate embodiments, an insulator may be used to position the conductive interconnect and to insulate against cathode contact.

It is noted that the conductive interconnects may be connected to formed or
20 unformed portions of the anode layer.

One way to manufacture a capacitor according to the present teachings is to use a robotic assembly method, whereby anodes which are already masked, etched, and formed are stacked, followed by separator material, and then cathode material. In one assembly process, the cathodes are precision punched to provide accurately
25 placed cathode holes. The robot can use the cathode features to accurately place the cathode relative to the anodes. A separator layer and an anode layer are also placed over the cathode using the robot. In embodiments where the conductive interconnect is a metal plug, the robot places the conductive plug accurately prior to the placement of the separator and anode layers. This process may be repeated

to provide a stack of anodes of multiple layers interspersed with separator and cathode layers. The robot can also be used to perform the welding steps.

Other types of conductive interconnects may be used without departing from the present system. For example, the conductive interconnects may be made of a non-circular cross section. The conductive interconnects may be made of a suitable metal, such as aluminum. The conductive interconnects may also be made of other materials, including, but not limited to, conductive epoxy, conductive polymer (such as polyimide filled with aluminum), or fused aluminum powder. The metal used in the conductive interconnect should match the anode metal.

Other anode metals/interconnect metal pairs may be used including, but not limited to, tantalum, hafnium, niobium, titanium, zirconium, or combinations of these metals.

It is understood that other connections may be performed using the teachings provided herein. For example, it is possible to create a series of interconnections between cathode layers using the teachings provided. Thus, use of the present system is not limited to anode-anode connections.

In one embodiment, the anode layers consist of a plurality of anode foils. In one application it is possible that a single anode foil is interconnected to a triple anode foil or any multiplicity of anode foil combinations.

In one embodiment an anode layer may include a plurality of parts and/or layers. For example, the anode layer may include two different anode shapes in the same layer to provide a contoured edge. The shapes may be electrically connected to provide an equipotential surface. The use of multiple anode parts for a single layer facilitates the construction of a capacitor of virtually any form factor.

Furthermore, it is possible to weld multiple anode-cathode-anode stacks at different points for different conductive interconnects in one operation. Additionally, depending on the welding process used, several anode/cathode layers can be welded in a single operation.

Some of the benefits of the present system include, but are not limited to, the following: the electrical connection system provides mechanical stability; and

alignment to the stack as the layers are being assembled; taping is not required; the assembly is ready for insertion into the capacitor case; surface area is optimized; interior alignment is facilitated using interior features to align the stack layer to layer; edge-welding and/or intra-anode staking may be eliminated; and, in some
5 embodiments, paper gluing may be eliminated.

Exemplary Embodiment of Implantable Defibrillator

Figure 13 shows one of the many applications for capacitors incorporating one or more teachings of the present invention: an implantable heart monitor or
10 apparatus 700. As used herein, implantable heart monitor includes any implantable device for providing therapeutic stimulus to a heart muscle. Thus, for example, the term includes pacemakers, defibrillators, cardioverters, congestive heart failure devices, and combinations and permutations thereof.

Heart monitor 700 includes a lead system 703, which after implantation
15 electrically contact strategic portions of a patient's heart. Shown schematically are portions of monitor 700 including a monitoring circuit 702 for monitoring heart activity through one or more of the leads of lead system 703, and a therapy circuit 701 for delivering electrical energy through one or more of the leads to a heart. Monitor 700 also includes an energy storage component, which includes a battery
20 704 and incorporates at least one capacitor 705 having one or more of the features of the exemplary capacitors described above.

In addition to implantable heart monitor and other cardiac rhythm management devices, one or more teachings of the present invention can be incorporated into cylindrical capacitors and/or capacitors used for photographic
25 flash equipment. Indeed, teachings of the invention are pertinent to any application where high-energy, high-voltage, or space-efficient capacitors are desirable. Moreover, one or more teachings are applicable to batteries.

Conclusion

In furtherance of the art, the inventors have devised connection structures
5 and methods for interconnecting the anode foils and the cathode foils of capacitors.
In one embodiment, a method includes connecting together one or more anode
connection members of one or more anode foils and one or more cathode
connection members of one or more cathode foils and electrically isolating the one
or more anode foils from the one or more cathode foils. Among other advantages,
10 the exemplary method reduces the number of processing steps for constructing a
capacitor.

It is understood that the above description is intended to be illustrative, and
not restrictive. Many other embodiments will be apparent to those of skill in the
art upon reviewing the above description. The scope of the invention should,
15 therefore, be determined with reference to the appended claims, along with the full
scope of equivalents to which such claims are entitled.

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:
stacking a plurality of cathodes layers and a plurality of anode layers such that a cathode connection member on each of the cathode layers at least partially overlays an anode connection member on each of the anode layers;
connecting the cathode connection members together with the anode connection members; and
electrically isolating the anode layers from the cathode layers.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein electrically isolating includes removing a portion of the anode connection member of each of the anode layers.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein electrically isolating includes removing at least a portion of a commonly positioned portion of the cathode connection members and the anode connection members.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein electrically isolating includes laser cutting a commonly positioned portion of each of the anode connection members and the cathode connection members.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein connecting includes connecting during a continuous connection process.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein connecting includes using an uninterrupted connecting process to connect one or more edges of a distal portion of each of the anode connection members to one or more edges of a distal portion of each of the cathode connection members.

7. A method comprising:

positioning an anode connection member having a distal section and a proximal section and a cathode connection member having a distal section and a proximal section so that the distal section of the cathode connection member at least partially overlays the distal section of the anode connection member;

connecting the anode connection member and the cathode connection member; and

forming a separation in the connection between the anode connection member and the cathode connection member such that the proximal section of the anode connection member is electrically isolated from the proximal section of the cathode connection member.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein positioning further includes positioning the anode connection member and the cathode connection member so that the distal section of the cathode connection member does not overlay the entire distal section of the anode connection member.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein connecting includes connecting the distal section of the anode connection member and the distal section of the cathode connection member.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein forming a separation includes removing a portion of the distal section of the anode connection member.

11. The method of claim 7, wherein forming a separation includes removing a portion of the distal section of the anode connection member and a portion of the distal section of the cathode connection member.

12. The method of claim 7, wherein forming a separation includes removing a portion of the distal section of the anode connection member such that there remains no portion of the cathode connection member adjacent the anode connection member.
13. A method comprising:
stacking a plurality of cathode layers and a plurality of anode layers such that an anode connection member on each of the anode layers at least partially overlays a cathode connection member on each of the cathode layers;
connecting the cathode connection members together with the anode connection members; and
electrically isolating the anode layers from the cathode layers.
14. The method of claim 13, wherein electrically isolating includes removing a portion of the cathode connection member of each of the cathode layers.
15. The method of claim 13, wherein electrically isolating includes removing at least a portion of a commonly positioned portion of the cathode connection members and the anode connection members.
16. A capacitor having a capacitor stack formed by a method comprising:
stacking a plurality of cathodes layers and a plurality of anode layers such that a cathode connection member on each of the cathode layers at least partially overlays an anode connection member on each of the anode layers;
connecting the cathode connection members together with the anode connection members; and
electrically isolating the anode layers from the cathode layers.

17. The capacitor formed by the method of claim 16, wherein electrically isolating includes removing a portion of the anode connection member of each of the anode layers.

18. The capacitor formed by the method of claim 16, wherein electrically isolating includes removing at least a portion of a commonly positioned portion of the cathode connection members and the anode connection members.

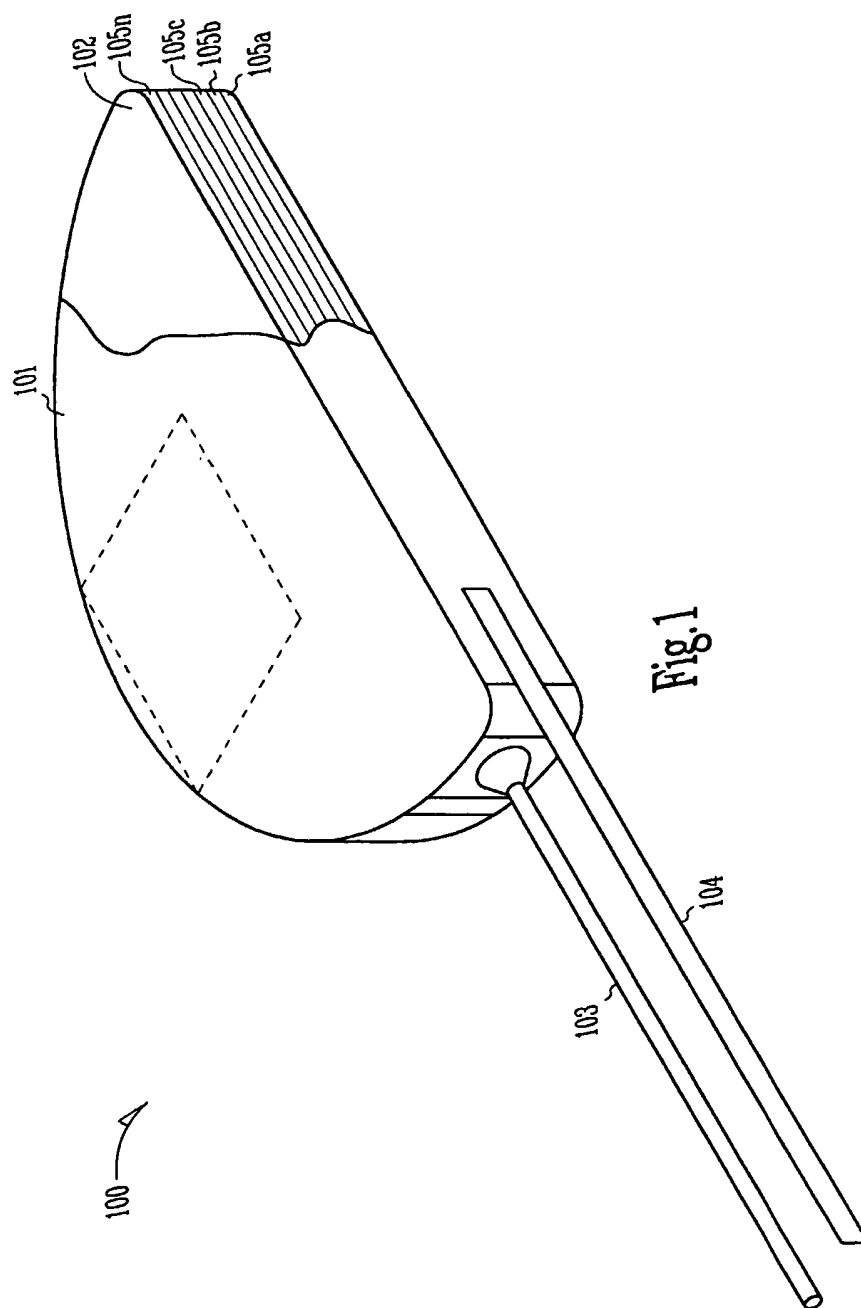
19. The capacitor formed by the method of claim 16, wherein electrically isolating includes removing a portion of the anode connection member such that there remains no portion of the cathode connection member adjacent the anode connection member.

20. The capacitor formed by the method of claim 16, wherein connecting includes connecting one or more edges of a distal portion of the anode connection member to one or more edges of a distal portion of the cathode connection member.

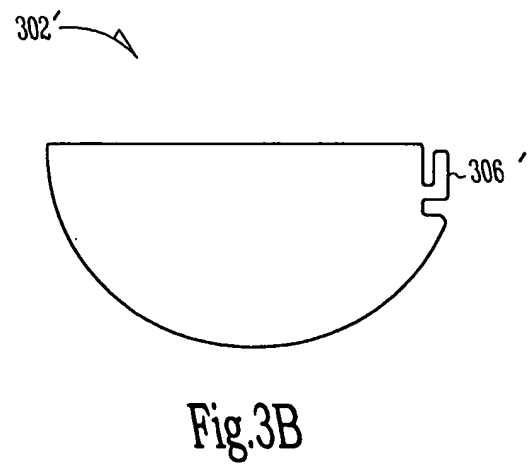
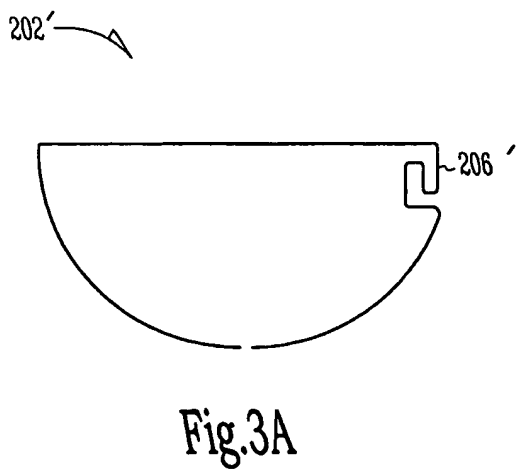
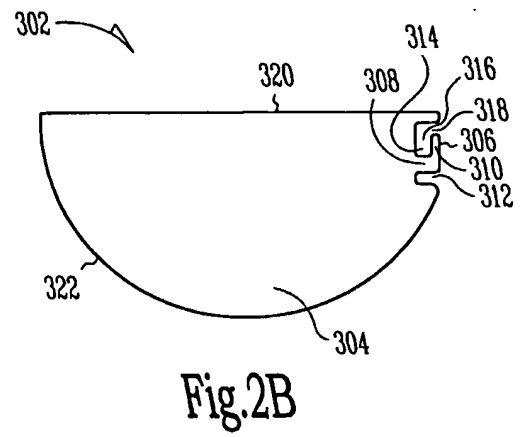
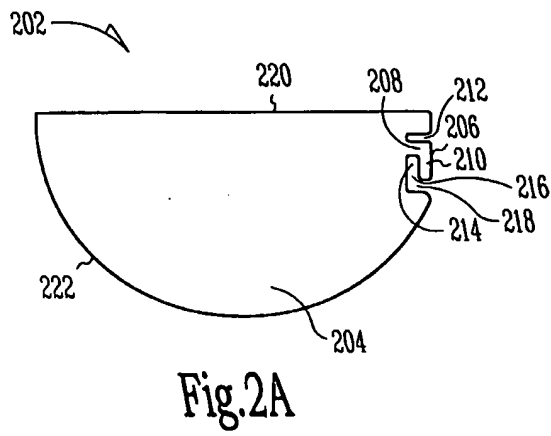
21. The capacitor formed by the method of claim 16, wherein stacking a plurality of cathodes layers and a plurality of anode layers includes stacking the cathode layers and the anode layers such that a distal section of the cathode connection member does not overlay an entire distal section of the anode connection member.

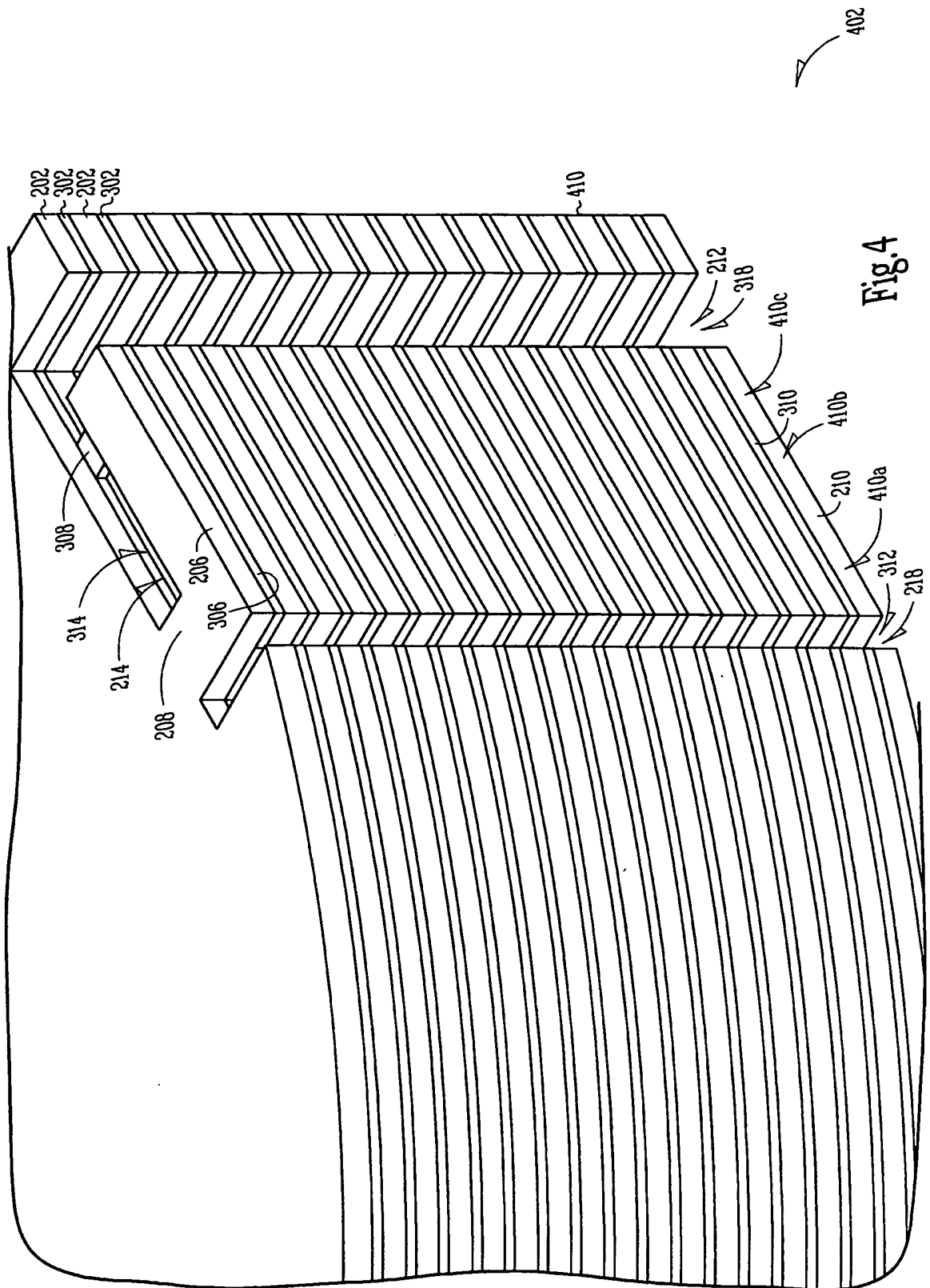
22. A capacitor stack comprising:
a plurality of cathode layers having cathode connection members; and
a plurality of anode layers having anode connection members, wherein the anode connection members are connected to the cathode connection members and configured such that the anode layers can be electrically separated from the cathode layers by cutting only the anode connection members.
23. The capacitor stack of claim 22, wherein the cathode connection member on each of the cathode layers only partially overlays the anode connection member on each of the anode layers.
24. The capacitor stack of claim 22, wherein a distal section of the cathode connection member does not overlay an entire distal section of the anode connection member.
25. The capacitor stack of claim 22, wherein the capacitor stack can be cut such that there remains no portion of any cathode connection member adjacent the anode connection members.
26. A capacitor stack comprising:
a plurality of cathode layers having cathode connection members; and
a plurality of anode layers having anode connection members, wherein the cathode connection members are connected to the anode connection members and configured such that the cathode layers can be electrically separated from the anode layers by cutting only the cathode connection members.
27. The capacitor stack of claim 26, wherein the anode connection member on each of the anode layers only partially overlays the cathode connection member on each of the cathode layers.

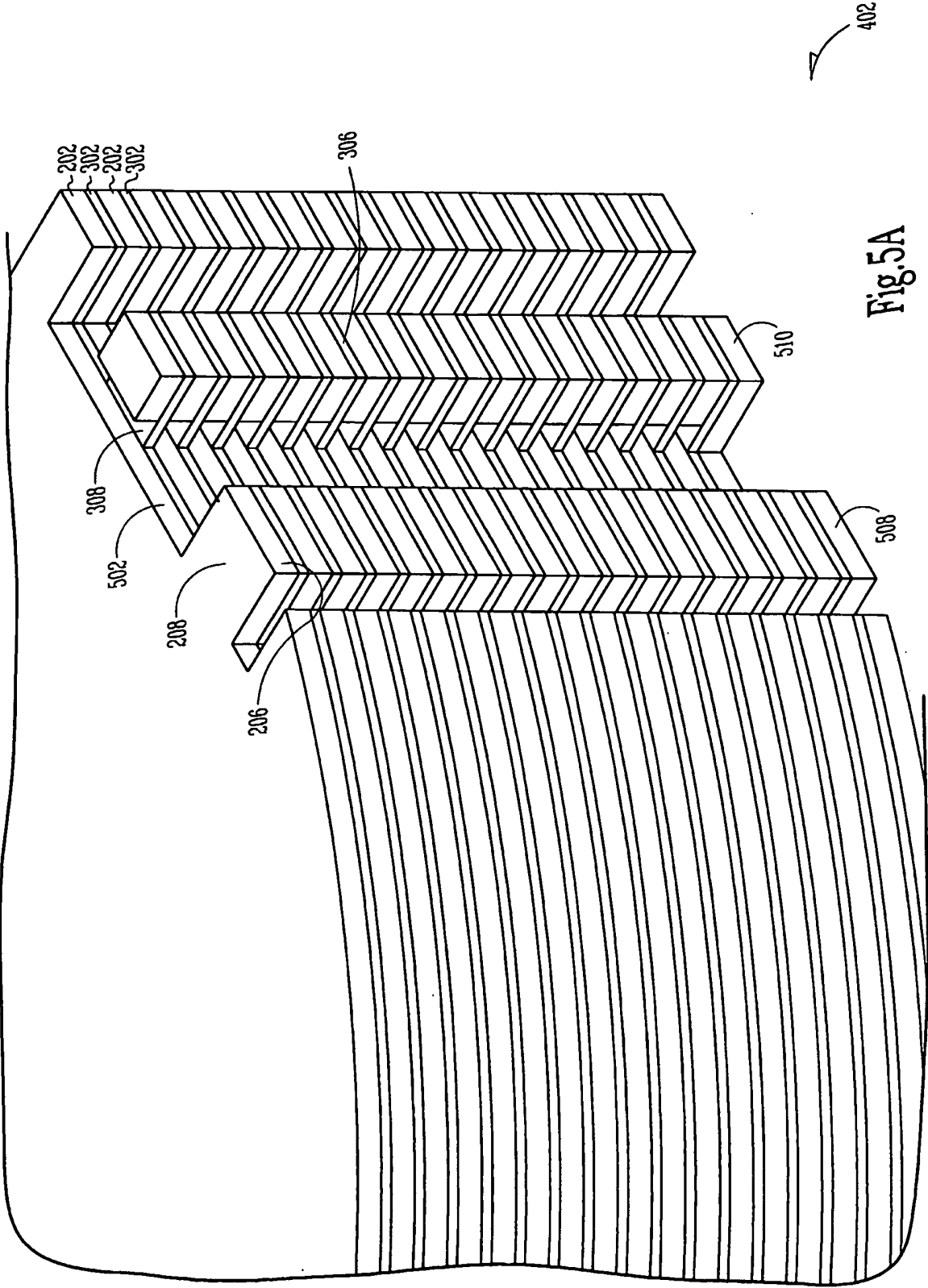
28. The capacitor stack of claim 26, wherein a distal section of the anode connection members does not overlay an entire distal section of the cathode connection members.
29. The capacitor stack of claim 26, wherein the capacitor stack can be cut such that there remains no portion of any anode connection member adjacent the cathode connection members.
30. A capacitor stack comprising:
a plurality of cathode layers having cathode connection members; and
a plurality of anode layers having anode connection members, wherein the anode connection members are connected to the cathode connection members and configured such that the anode layers can be electrically separated from the cathode layers such that no cathode material is located on the anode connection members.
31. The capacitor stack of claim 30, wherein the cathode connection member on each of the cathode layers only partially overlays the anode connection member on each of the anode layers.
32. The capacitor stack of claim 30, wherein a distal section of the cathode connection member does not overlay an entire distal section of the anode connection member.

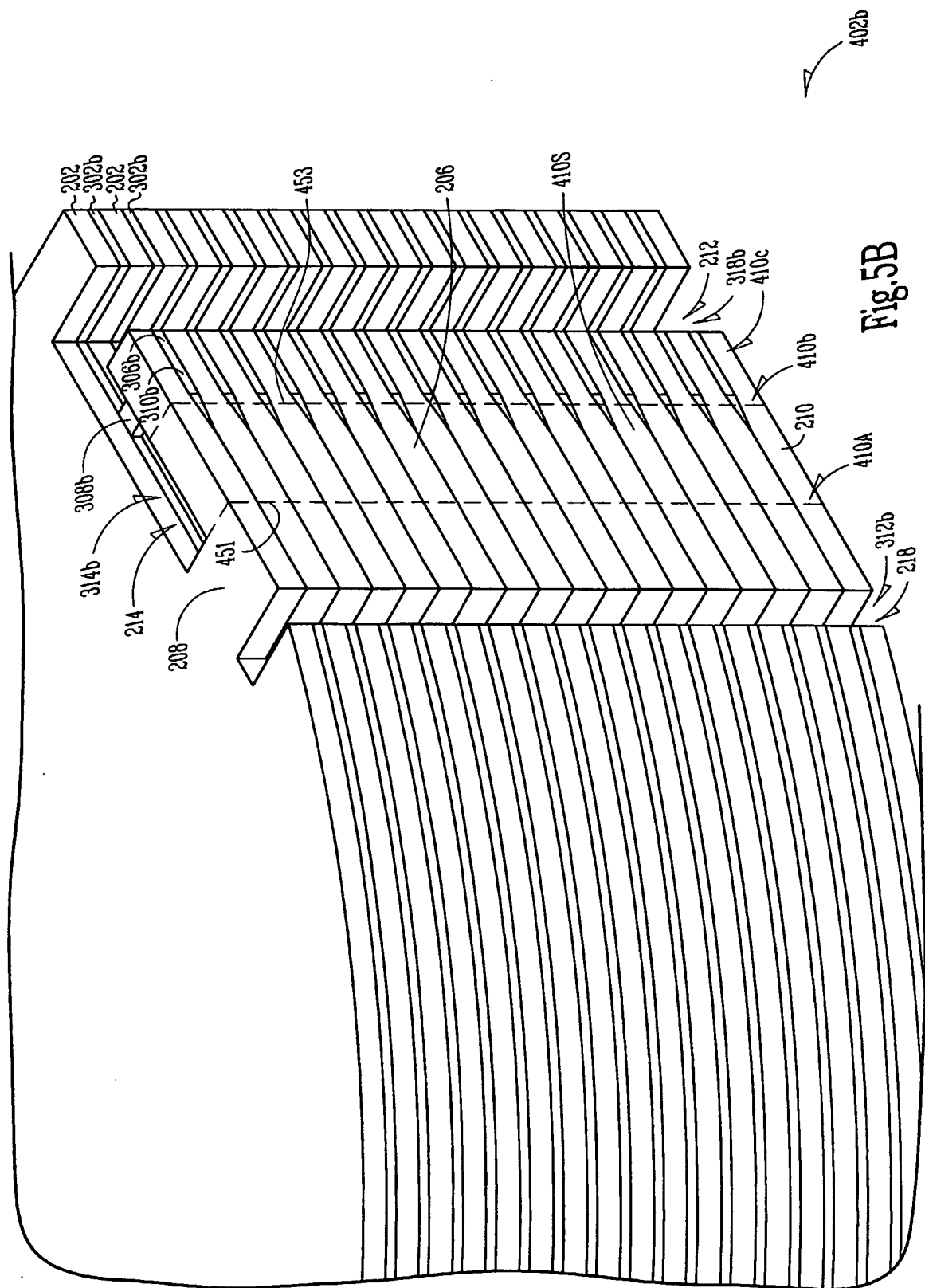


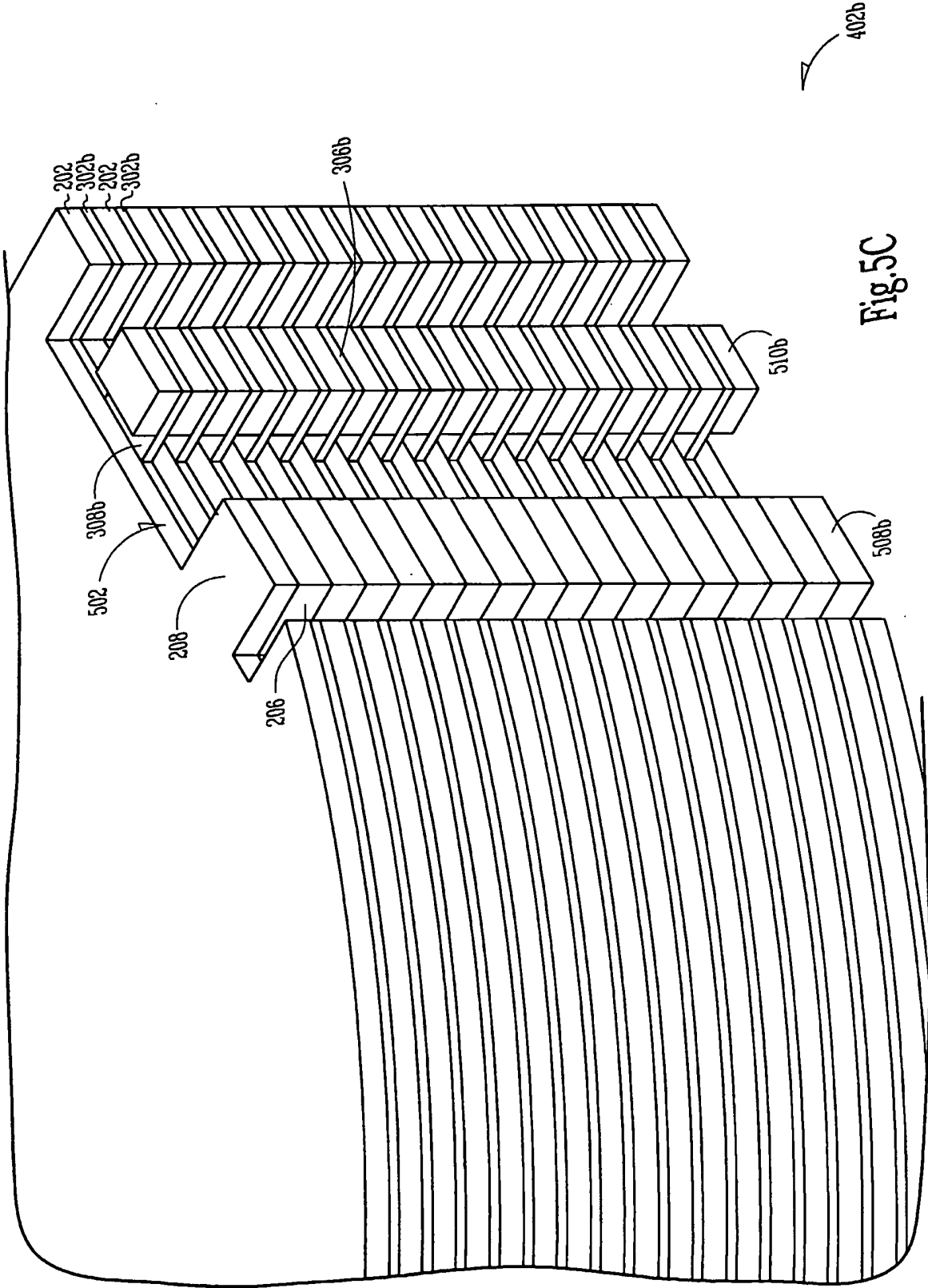
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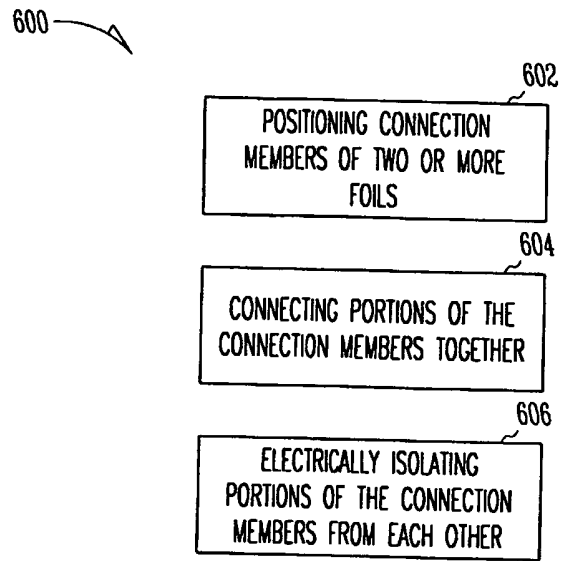


Fig.6

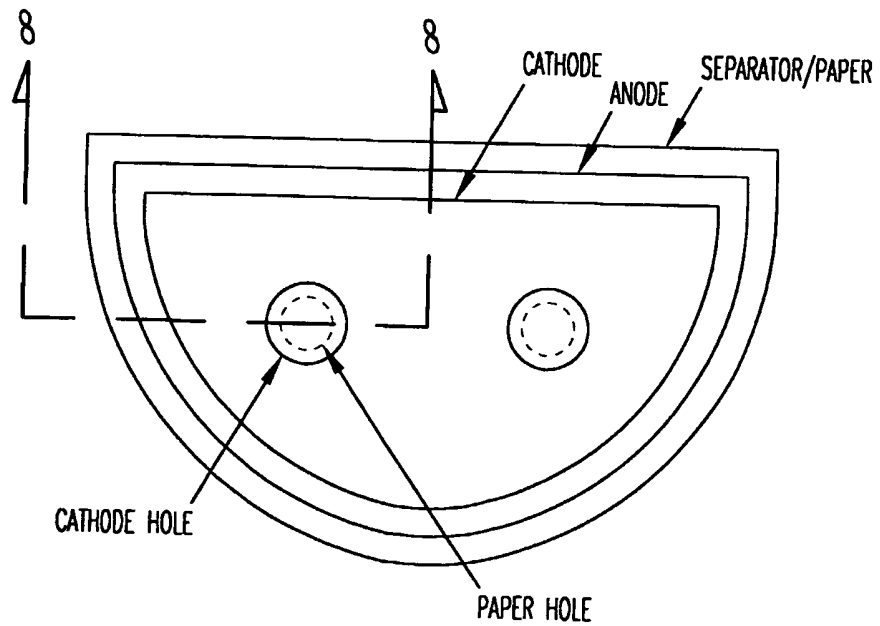


Fig.7

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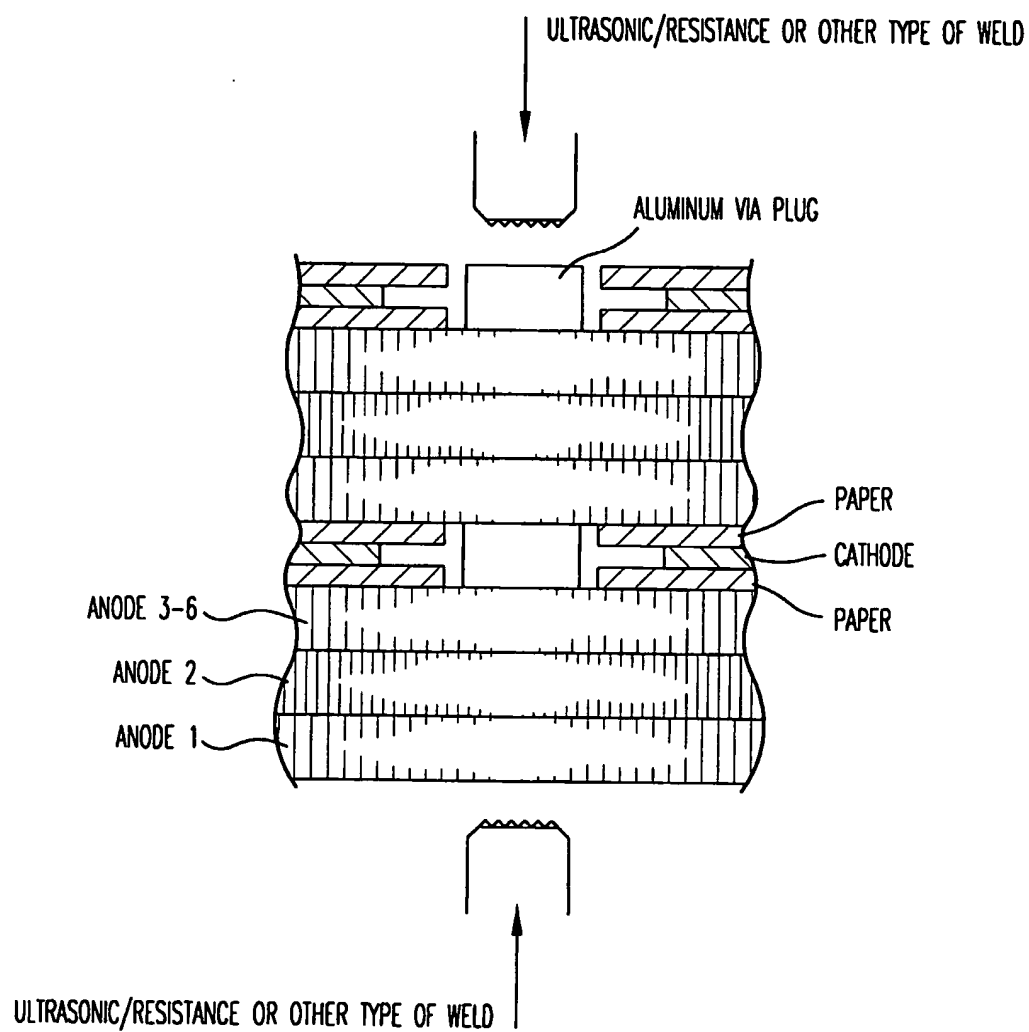


Fig.8

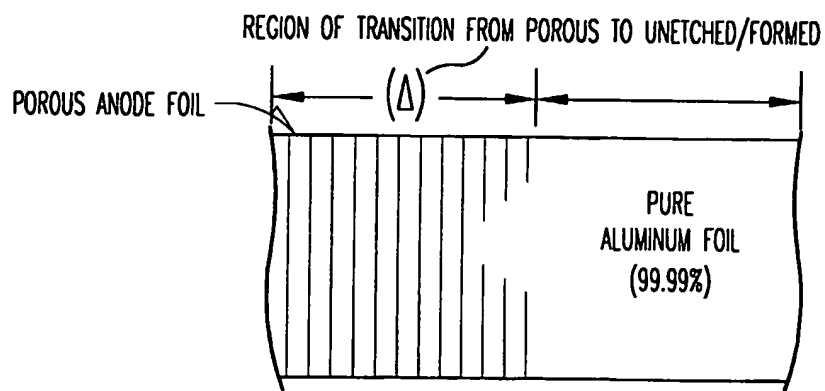


Fig.9

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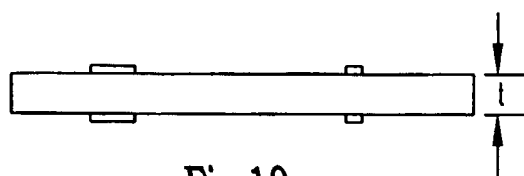


Fig. 10

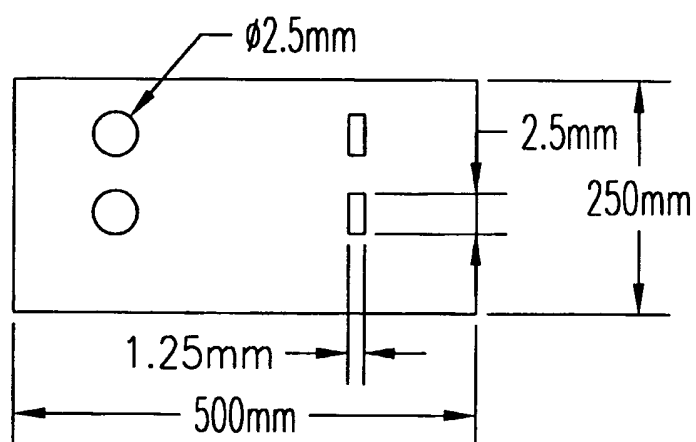


Fig. 11

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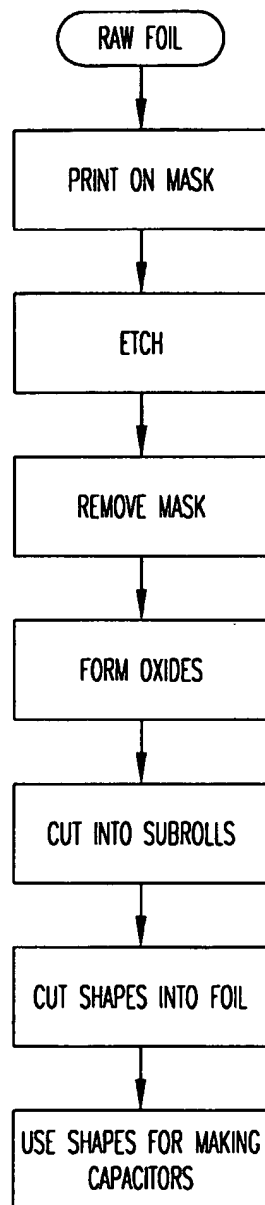


Fig.12

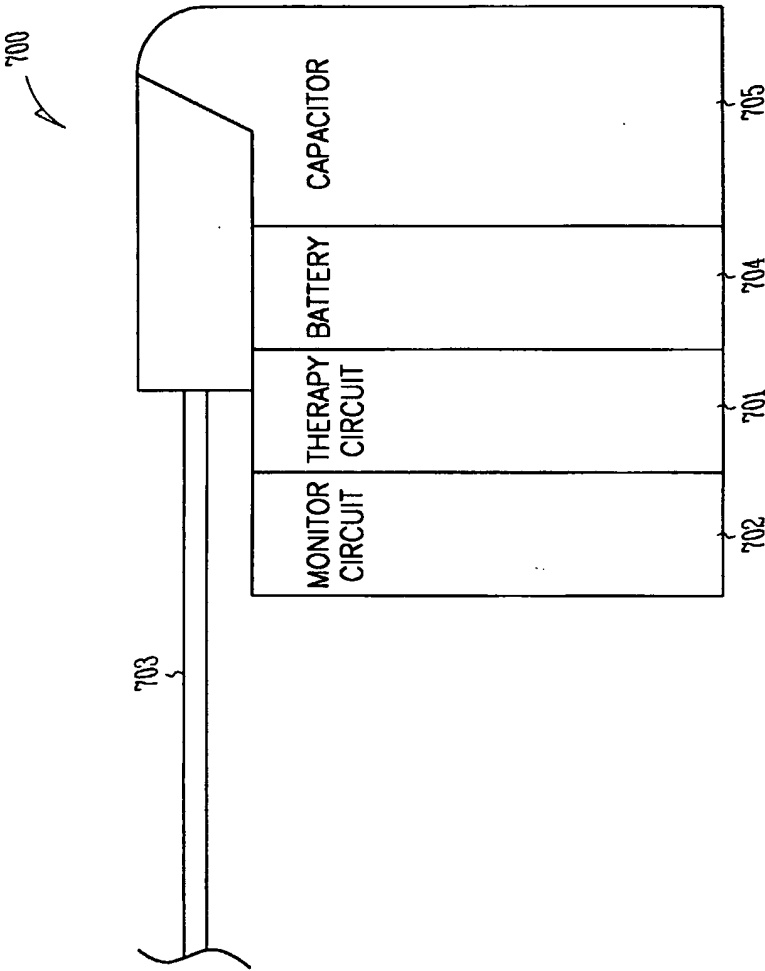


FIG. 13

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/US2005/021898

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 H01G9/00 A61N1/375

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 H01G A61N

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the International search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 02/37515 A (CARDIAC PACEMAKERS, INC) 10 May 2002 (2002-05-10) the whole document -----	1-32

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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- *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
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Date of the actual completion of the international search

25 October 2005

Date of mailing of the international search report

03/11/2005

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/US2005/021898

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
WO 0237515	A	10-05-2002	AU 2001302 A	15-05-2002
			EP 1352405 A2	15-10-2003
			US 2003072124 A1	17-04-2003
			US 6509588 B1	21-01-2003
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